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ABSTRACT

These papers represent a general discussion of the problems and prospects for teaching Latin American Studies in two-year colleges. More broadly, they highlight the difficulties of introducing any sort of intercultural dimension into the two-year college curriculum. Sheila Tesar discusses the constraints of state regulations and student attitudes in expanding Latin American coursework, and the two most promising approaches--incorporation of units in existing offerings and establishment of continuing education courses. Patrick Foley describes the interdisciplinary approach adopted for social sciences, humanities, and Spanish language courses at Tarrant County Junior College, Northwest campus. Deficiencies of present U. S. history courses and the needs of Chicano students for an accurate and unbiased portrayal of Mexican American history are reviewed by Jose Roberto Juarez, Sr. Felix Tejera discusses the administrative resistance to instituting Latin American history courses that instructors may face, student-oriented problems, lack of appropriate textbooks, and needed professional resources. (BB)

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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF INTRODUCING LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES INTO THE COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE CURRICULUM

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Abstract

The four papers contained in this publication were prepared in conjunction with the Latin American Culture Studies Project for Community and Junior Colleges and delivered at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Council on Latin American Studies (SCOLAS) in Lubbock, Texas, on March 3, 1977. The papers represent a general discussion of the problems and prospects of teaching Latin American Studies in community and junior colleges, each from the institutional, geographical, and disciplinary perspective of its author. More broadly, however, they highlight the difficulties in general of introducing any sort of intercultural dimension, regardless of the culture in question, into the two-year college curriculum.

The four papers in this publication were prepared in conjunction with the Latin American Culture Studies Project for Community and Junior Colleges and delivered at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Council on Latin American Studies (SCOLAS) in Lubbock, Texas, on March 3, 1977.

The Latin American Culture Studies Project is a multi-purpose one-year program, designed to improve Latin American studies offerings, for educators working at two-year colleges. Through a series of conferences and a summer workshop, the program has undertaken to orient and train faculty in a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary approach to the humanistic aspects of the Latin American cultural heritage.

The program has four major components:

a) Training persons engaged in or preparing to engage in Latin American studies, but especially training teachers at the community college level through a series of conferences and a summer workshop.

b) The collection and development of appropriate instructional and curriculum materials and other information related to Latin American culture studies, to be demonstrated and exhibited at the conferences and to be disseminated throughout Texas in published form.

c) The dissemination and "institutionalization" of this material through the above-mentioned publications and through the development of course "modules" on Latin American studies that could be adapted to the general education curriculum of two-year institutions according to local needs, resources, and demand.

d) Finally, the inclusion of community colleges in the "Resource Center for Educators Interested in Latin American Culture Studies" and the "Resource Center Network," both of which are part of the Institute of Latin American Studies.

In addition, we hope to work with all community groups, individuals, and organizations having an interest in Latin American culture studies, to

assist them in promoting, encouraging, developing, or producing programs and other activities that relate to the history, culture, or traditions of the Latin Americans. This will be done primarily through the Resource Center.

The four papers contained in this special publication represent a general discussion of the problems and prospects of teaching Latin American studies in community and junior colleges, each from the institutional, geographical, and disciplinary perspective of its author. More broadly, however, they highlight the difficulties in general of introducing any sort of intercultural dimension, regardless of the culture in question, into the two-year college curriculum. As Professor Tesar points out in her paper, "the predominant values held by community college students are pragmatic, realistic. School represents an investment of scarce resources: time and money." For these students school is a means to an end, and many students "demand to know the relevance of each course in their curriculum to the practical goals they have set for themselves."

It is this interest in acquiring practical skills as opposed to abstract knowledge that is in large measure responsible for the dramatic increase in junior college enrollments and adult education since the mid sixties. It has been argued that what the new college students want is to acquire skills that will contribute to their survival or help them to satisfy creative urges.

The question of survival raises another point, however. Is survival only a matter of learning how to repair an automobile or grasp the fundamentals of accounting? One's ability to cope with an increasingly complex and interdependent international system, within which hundreds of nations and millions of people are battling for scarce natural resources, is also a key to our survival, both individually and as a nation. Obviously, what the OPEC nations decide to charge for their oil, how good a wheat harvest the USSR has, and whether or not a new Panama Canal treaty can be agreed upon will all ultimately affect our lives.

Perhaps even more important to us as a nation, however, is the intercultural dimension in education. Ours is a culturally pluralistic society. How do we

prepare people to live in this society and benefit from it? The philosophy of education and social organization of the United States for the past two hundred years has emphasized the concept of the melting pot. One of our richest resources as a nation is the number of minority cultures that make up this country. In this regard, it needs to be kept in mind that a cultural experience can come from studying domestic as well as foreign cultures.

Yet today, this is still a nation that in many respects is one of territorial minorities characterized by racial and ethnic antagonisms. We need to go beyond the melting pot, in the famous phrase of Glazer and Moynihan, and to recognize, that, in the words of Greeley, "the hope of unity through homogenization betrayed a profound misunderstanding of the human condition."

We need to encourage heterogeneity and pride in one's heritage and to integrate an intercultural perspective or dimension into the educational process by studying our own minorities as well as foreign cultures, beginning in grade school and continuing on through community colleges and universities. Such a step could be a major contribution to overcoming the racial and ethnic conflicts that for two hundred years have prevented us from realizing our ideals as a democratic nation. As at least one study has concluded, "analytic second culture experiences are required to stabilize personal security and openness, and interpersonal trust and empathy with people of different domestic and foreign cultures."[1]

Our hope with this project for community and junior colleges is to develop an intercultural dimension for inclusion in the already existing junior college general education curriculum. The central idea is to try to integrate this intercultural perspective into the process of general education, that is, "the formal process by which our people are prepared to live effectively in this society." The central concern of our project is not to create new courses or to develop specialized programs in Latin American studies. The goal is to broaden regular courses and programs to include significant information and experiences from both domestic and foreign cultures. By broadening the general education of students, we will be able to move away from the monocultural ethnocentric viewpoints that have

often been so typical of general education and that have contributed to both domestic and international ethnocentrism.

The need to broaden general education in this way is certainly great. In 1974 a conference was held in Zurich, Switzerland, to "shed light on what is needed in the way of global studies at the precollegiate level." But the findings also tell us quite a bit about what is going on at the collegiate level. It was reported at the conference, in a survey conducted by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), that "only 8 percent of the 225,000 teachers that graduate each year in the U.S. have any access to information, analysis or experience in the international field." A second AACTE survey reported that "of 900 deans of education polled throughout the U.S., 60 percent said they had absolutely no interest in international education." The conference chairman, Dr. B. Frank Brown, said: "In spite of rapidly developing interdependence among nations, and the universal urge for a new commitment to world peace, practically nothing is being done in the schooling of young people in the United States to deal with these singificant global issues."[2]

Although in recent years the U.S. Office of Education has attempted to encourage the inclusion of an intercultural dimension in the general education curriculum at both the precollegiate and undergraduate college level, "overall the response of the American Educational System to the challenge of preparing citizens for effective coping in an interconnected world is woefully inadequate."[3] One of the problems that has been largely unknown among the general public and widely ignored by the press, but nonetheless one that has become increasingly pressing to the American socio-political and economic systems, especially in the southwestern United States, is the problem of illegal aliens in the United States. In 1976, the U.S. Immigration Service apprehended a total of 870,000 illegal aliens, yet for every one that is caught at least two or three are not. Nine out of ten of all those caught were Mexicans. Why are most illegals in the U.S. from Mexico and other Latin American nations? The answer to this question and a solution to the problem of illegal migrants is difficult to explain unless someone has the basic knowledge to grasp it in its total context. Fundamentally, it is an international, structural economic problem, but it is also related to the total history of the U.S. and Latin

America, especially Mexico. The status of Puerto Rico and of the Cubans in Miami are two more problems that have both international scope and important and profound domestic consequences for the United States.

How many people realize that the United States is the fifth-largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world? That Hispano Americans constitute this nation's second biggest minority and in a decade are likely to pass Blacks as the largest minority? That more money is spent on bilingual education programs involving Spanish than on all other languages combined? That until 1848 the entire southwestern United States was under Spanish and then Mexican rule? These questions are important because the answers to them will help all Americans understand both the domestic and the international social, political, and economic implications of policies directed toward dealing with questions like Panama, Puerto Rico, illegal immigrants, and bilingual education and the myriad of other domestic and international questions facing Americans today.

The papers in this little publication dealing with the problems and prospects of teaching Latin American studies at community and junior colleges can be viewed as addressing the much broader question of how we are going to integrate an intercultural dimension into the general community college curriculum regardless of cultural area. Our hope is that these papers will provide the basis for a discussion that will generate the kinds of ideas and programs for action for a more effective global education throughout two-year institutions in Texas and elsewhere. Our concern is not with creating new and specialized courses or in producing Latin American experts. The theoretical concerns of cross-cultural experience and research can be left to others. We want to know how we can apply the knowledge that we have of other cultures in the classroom so that students will graduate better prepared to live in an increasingly interdependent world.

It is our hope that the Latin American Culture Studies Project for Community and Junior Colleges will encourage the best features of our pluralistic society so that our differences--instead of leading to intolerance, conflict, and despair--will lead us to understanding, harmony, and hope.

Edward Glab, Jr.

Notes

[1]John Carpentier, The Intercultural Imperative (New Delhi: Mohan Makhijani at Rekha Printers, 1973), p. 3.

[2]Foundation News, November/December, 1974.

[3]Rose L. Hayden, "Internationalizing Public Education: What the States are Doing" (Unpublished paper delivered at the Twentieth Annual Convention of the Comparative and International Education Society, Toronto, Canada, 1976), p. 3.

Latin American Culture Studies in Community Colleges: Alternate Approaches

by
Sheila Tesar

Comprehensive Community Colleges: The Setting for Change

As Latin Americanists, all of us would like to share our interest in this area of the world with an ever-expanding circle of students. With community and junior colleges currently enrolling over one-half of entering freshmen and sophomores, these institutions appear to be a prime target for the introduction of, and generation of enthusiasm for, studies related to Latin America. However, although change is a constant on the community college scene, successful innovation must be accompanied by an understanding of and respect for the nature of the institution.

Comprehensive community colleges are relatively new entrants to the educational milieu. During the 1960s, while traditional college campuses of this nation were racked with "revolutionists" forcing them to be relevant to the times, the greatest transformation in higher education was taking place almost without notice with the community college becoming a major element of higher education in the United States.[1] The community college is neither a glorified high school nor a pale university. It has grown from its beginnings as a junior college, primarily concerned with offering a lower division collegiate course of study, to a multipurpose institutional offering all types of programs for all types of people and dedicated to the principle of lifelong education.[2]

The public two-year college is an outgrowth of a philosophy of education that advocates the provision of equal opportunity by teaching whatever needs to be learned to whoever needs to learn it, whenever he needs to learn it. To make this broad mission operational, such colleges attempt to fulfill the following needs:

(1) The need for programs of liberal arts and science courses that would be transferable to an accredited four-year college or university and applied towards baccalaureate degrees,

(2) The need for vocational technical programs designed to prepare students for entry or reentry into the job market, with such programs of long or short duration depending upon the amount of time needed by the student to complete the requirements for entrance into the occupation,

(3) The need for adult courses for which credit may or may not be given, designed to provide general education, to facilitate occupational growth, to improve constructive use of leisure time, and to increase personal and family living satisfactions and cultural depth,

(4) The need for individual services to students, including guidance and counseling,

(5) The need for programs and services designed to remove deficiencies in preparation for college programs, and

(6) The need for programs and services for individuals and groups interested in cultural, civic, recreational, or other community betterment projects.[3]

In fulfilling all these purposes, the two-year college has become more diverse in defined functions, programs, clientele, and philosophical bases than any other educational institution in existence. It has become characterized by at least five recognized discriptors: it is democratic, comprehensive, community centered, dedicated to lifelong education, and adaptable.[4] These characteristics demand a degree of flexibility unheard of in other types of educational institutions. Thus, the introduction of Latin American culture studies to this new learning environment should take into account the constraints and resources specific to the setting. In this presentation, constraints limiting the expansion of Latin American coursework will be discussed, followed by suggestions for alternative approaches to the dissemination of knowledge about our fascinating interdisciplinary field of study.

Regional Structural Constraints

Two types of structural constraints mitigate against the addition of new courses with Latin American content in Texas community junior colleges.

First, courses dealing with Latin America are by nature specialized and generally do not appear in a curriculum until the junior or senior year.

Community colleges in Texas are prohibited from offering courses at other than a freshman or sophomore level. In order to receive state aid reimbursement for a course, a community college must demonstrate that two public senior institutions (those awarding at least a baccalaureate degree) offer the same course at the freshman or sophomore level.[5] The intent of this regulation is twofold: first, to keep community colleges within their role and scope as academic transfer institutions; and second, to provide a guarantee to transfer students that their credits will be accepted if and when they do change schools. Thus curricular expansion at the community college level is limited to the extent of freshman and sophomore offerings at public senior institutions.

A second structural constraint is associated with the Texas requirement for twelve hours of American government and history for the attainment of an Associate of Arts degree. Six of these hours must deal with Texas history and government, the other six with general American government. There is no room for flexibility, as these stipulations are statutory. Upon completing these twelve hours, no other social sciences are required for the A.A. degree; therefore, unless a student has designated a major and intends to transfer, there is no incentive to take any additional coursework.

Student Attitudinal Constraints

About 50 percent of students enrolling in community colleges can be classified as transfer students. Of these, less than half designate a major, with the majority simply taking basic requirements to total about sixty hours for the A.A. degree. Of those who classify themselves as transfer students, about half actually transfer to senior institutions. Because variety and diversity characterize the student population, it is dangerous to make too many generalizations. However, many studies such as Patricia Cross's[6] have told us that these students are older (average age 28), have less successful academic records than their university counterparts, are more representative of ethnic minorities than senior institutions, and come from a lower socio-economic stratum. In Texas, more students are part-time than are full-time; most commute; most work either full- or part-time. From this description one can assume that the predominant values held by such students are pragmatic, realistic. School

represents an investment of scarce resources: time and money. For many it is more a means to an end than it is an end in itself. Counselors say that many students want to know exactly what they need to get out, and they demand to know the relevance of each course in their curriculum to the practical goals they have set for themselves. We can be fairly certain that information on Latin America has not figured in these students' prior academic training. Given a pragmatic perspective untouched by earlier incentives to pursue this area, coursework in Latin American fields might appear irrelevant, even esoteric.

Alternative Approaches

Given that there are structural and financial constraints on the community colleges, together with a lack of motivation on the part of the students, what can be done to encourage pursuit of Latin American culture studies? Three possibilities come to mind. First, curricula at all levels of institutions could be expanded to include new courses in Latin America, thus providing an incentive for transfer. Second, the notion of courses could be put aside, introducing in its place the incorporation of units or modules with a Latin American emphasis into current offerings. Third, a thrust could be made in the direction of continuing adult education, a reaching out to the thousands of students who come simply for their own enlightenment and growth without regard to the formal appurtenances associated with traditional higher education. Let us examine each in turn.

(1) If there were more lower division course offerings with Latin American content in senior institutions, the way would be opened for introducing similar courses in community colleges. This would produce a broader array from which students could choose. However, it doesn't offer a solution to the requirement for American (they mean North American) social studies, nor does it address the problem of student motivation to enroll.

(2) The second option generates brighter prospects. Within the social sciences, languages, fine and applied arts, and humanities there are numerous opportunities for inclusion of Latin American referenced units. One can envision a thematic approach to history, where the pampas and gauchos of Argentina could be taught along with our own tales of the West. The Monroe Doctrine

need not be the only part of North American foreign policy dealing with Latin America that is touched on in government courses. Why can't Neruda be included in the poetry component of sophomore literature? In Spanish classes, if cultural lessons are interspersed among the imperfect tense and the subjunctive, the tendency has been to rely on slides of Madrid. Why not Montevideo, or Santiago, or Lima? In economics we ought to be able to learn something about inflation from the Latin American experience--they certainly have had enough of it! The list of examples is endless. The topics are relevant, the comparisons, contrasts, interrelationships self-evident. The task is to bring these ideas to classroom teachers and to provide through faculty development the tools to convey them.

Our mention of tools is deliberate. Community colleges profess an underlying commitment to excellence in instruction, for only by incorporating and utilizing the advances of educational technology can successful learning experiences be generated for the new students. The study of Latin America will come alive if presented through systematic, comprehensive, humanistic procedures interjected with audio-visual materials and other new learning strategies. New cirriculum conveyed in a traditional lecture format will soon wither and die on the vine. The Latin American Culture Studies Project will be taking steps to develop exciting curricula and methods of instruction.

(3) Finally, if Latin Americanists really desire to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others, they must find ways to enter the realm of continuing adult education. In many community colleges, noncredit enrollment exceeds enrollment in credit courses, both academic transfer and vocational. In this arena, scholars interested in ever-more specialized topics might despair, but any wanting to share topics of general interest could have a ready audience. Most colleges must have from ten to fifteen interested students in order to offer the course, but with that caveat there are few limits on offerings. Courses constantly change; nothing in education is so flexible, current, and timely. A ready audience could be had now for a short course called "Coffee and Sugar--What's Happening?" Or how about "Christian Democrats--Carter's Not the First?"

Continuing education is also a major factor differentiating traditional junior colleges from comprehensive community colleges. According to the

Council for Community Services, community service should become the cutting edge with which the college penetrates the life of the community and becomes increasingly relevant to community needs. Throughout the Southwest, we have a growing population of citizens sharing cultural or linguistic ties with Latin America. Community colleges are currently serving this population more than are other institutions of higher education. However, a great deal can still be done. Through community education, people can be offered the opportunity to get in touch with their own roots, their own culture, in a manner free of the inhibitions and fears associated with credits and degrees.

While the constraints against the dissemination and growth of Latin American studies are real and not easy to put aside, there are avenues for progress. The three mentioned here include creation of more lower division courses at all levels, introduction of modules with Latin American emphasis into current offerings, and expansion of short, noncredit efforts in continuing education and community service. Any one or all three are worth pursuing, for Latin American culture is too valuable not to share.

Notes

[1]W.E. Hallman, So There's A Community College in Your Town (New York: UMHE Communication Office, 1976), p. 3.

[2]Win Kelley and Leslie Wilbur, Teaching in the Community Junior College (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), p. 3.

[3]Adapted from Ferris N. Crawford, "A Twentieth Century Institution: The Community College." Address delivered at Southwestern College Agreement Conference, Battle Creek, Michigan, Nov. 16, 1961. Cited in Clyde E. Blocker et al., The Two Year College: A Social Synthesis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), pp. 34-35.

[4]Ralph R. Fields, The Community College Movement (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962), pp. 63-95.

[5]A Manual of Approved Courses for State Appropriations to Texas Public Community Colleges (Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, 1975).

[6]K. Particia Cross, Beyond the Open Door (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1971).

Teaching Latin American Culture-Related Courses at the Two-Year College: One Approach

by
Patrick Foley

It is the purpose of this essay to explain the approach to teaching Latin American-related culture courses as developed by the faculty of the social science department at the Northwest Campus of Tarrant County Junior College. In the original planning stages several key factors became apparent, centering on the uniqueness of the communities feeding into the college, the nature and character of this campus, and the roles played by the several disciplines within the department. It is those areas that this paper will concentrate upon and, in so doing, it is hoped that it will provoke some thought. The main concern throughout the planning of our programs was to create an academic situation on the campus that would provide the students with as good an atmosphere as possible for their developing a better understanding and appreciation of the Spanish-speaking cultures.

Two-year colleges usually serve well defined local communities, as opposed to most four-year institutions, which derive their student body form a broader spectrum of society. Perhaps more so than any other institution of higher learning, the two-year colleges are an extension of the local community. Yet, while being influenced by the social, economic, cultural, and other representations of the locality they serve, the two-year colleges must effect change in those communities. In particular, they play a key role in bringing about a deeper awareness of other cultures to those communities.

The social, economic, and cultural nature of the area served by the Northwest Campus of Tarrant County Junior College clearly presents problems for the teaching of Latin American-related courses with the goals previously stated in mind. Yet there are challenging prospects for the future. Feeding

into the college is a predominantly white student population of middle income background. Much of the economic base for that middle income group comes from agribusiness, military establishments, and industry. The social and political outlook of the students coming from that background is for the most part conservative. Ten of the twelve secondary schools that feed into the Northwest Campus have a very small percentage of Spanish-speaking students. Some of those schools have virtually no such students and are of a rural nature. The other two secondary schools have a large percentage of Spanish-speaking students and are urban schools. While tne Northside and Diamond Hill areas of Fort Worth have a heavy Mexican American or Chicano population, the rural small towns on the outskirts of the city and in the surrounding area have little knowledge of the Mexican American or Chicano people and their heritage. Much the same pattern holds true for the adult enrollment and noncredit courses offered through our community services programs. In addition, this area of Texas offers a much larger group of Mexican American Protestants than would be found in, for example, New Mexico or California. Thus it became clear to our faculty that an interest in the Spanish-speaking cultures must be created in many areas and simply nourished in others. With this in mind, the faculty decided to take an approach that they felt would be meaningful to all students, emphasizing cultural study rather than strictly a more political type of "Chicano history."

From this point the department began to consider the nature of the institution itself and to plan within its framework. In many respects we found ourselves in a fortunate situation. To begin with, from its inception the campus had a commitment to the Spanish-speaking community. Several persons hired in administrative, faculty, and staff positions were Chicanos. Among this group were the president, the chairperson of general education (in charge of the entire liberal arts area), and the director of financial aid. Such surnames as Aguilar, Maldonado, Pérez, Rodriguez, and Vazquez appear on the faculty roster.

Another important segment of the institution, the library, had been concentrating on building up a decent bibliography of sources in Latin American studies with an emphasis on Mexican American or Chicano materials. As a result, a close working relationship developed between the library staff and the social science department faculty, to the benefit of the students.

The Spanish faculty on this campus are interdisciplinary oriented. Taking advantage of that, the social science faculty was able to obtain cooperation from them in developing a unified approach for encouraging students to study the Latin American cultures, particularly that of the Mexican American or Chicano. Several excellent results emerged from that cooperation. Especially significant was an agreement to allow credit in both history and Spanish for students taking advanced Spanish and the history of selected minorities. The presupposition was that those students would be asked to do their work in the history class as much as possible in Spanish. The history and Spanish faculties have shared, and are continuing to do so, the review and purchase of materials for their respective classes. The excellent educational film, "A Andalus," was jointly purchased. And is used in the minorities history courses and in the Spanish classes. Other such projects have also developed. This type of cooperation has been carried over into the procurement of sources for the library. We have, collectively, placed in the library several translations of works on American history, for example, the Nevins survey of United States history. One other important activity should be mentioned at this time. When publicity for the minorities history course was released, it was done so jointly with the announcement of our placement examinations for Spanish. That publicity material encourages students to participate in both Spanish and the history class. The philosophy behind this mutual effort clearly is related to our central concern in planning our program as stated at the beginning of this essay. It exhibits our commitment to creating an atmosphere in which students are best able to develop an understanding and appreciation of the cultures of the Spanish-speaking peoples, within the framework of regional, institutional, and disciplinary parameters. A side effect has been that faculty and staff not housed directly in the social science department are also encouraged to develop a greater interest in the teaching of courses related to the Latin American cultures. That has to be an obvious asset to those more directly concerned with such courses and programs.

Another dimension of our institutional framework that has been used whenever possible is that of regular communication with faculty, staff, and students of Mexican American or Chicano background. Several exciting and valuable contributions have come from them. Our Chicano artist,

Professor Eduardo Aguilar, has not only given us valued advice but will be appearing in our classes on a regular basis. Our sociologist, Professor Steven Vazquez, has been of help to us. Our own general education division chairperson, Rachel Ramirez Johnson, has been a constant source of encouragement and advice. We have received support from our director of financial aid, Mario Hernandez, in numerous ways. The Mexican American or Chicano students of this campus formed their own cultural club this past year. Reflecting the atmosphere that is so important to them, they selected the name VIVA MACC (Viva Mexican American Cultural Club). VIVA MACC has invited the author to their meetings on two occasions to discuss our programs. Some of the club's members are enrolled in the minorities history course as well as intermediate Spanish. They have asked to use one of the slide-tape projects the history class is creating on Mexican American culture of the Southwest for their own purposes. And they have requested that they be able to host at lunch one of our visiting Chicano professors at La Semana Chicana.

During the past year and a half, the social science department has been a supporter of M.A.C.E. Our sociologist, Professor Vazquez, has become active in T.A.C.H.E., and we have been active in conferences and programs such as this one sponsored by or supported by the Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Such activities have broadened our faculty's perspective on the teaching of courses related to Latin American studies and have been extremely valuable to us. Obviously, all of these, while not classroom activities, are essential to any well-rounded program relating to Latin American studies. We have encouraged them, and they have been well received. It is felt by our faculty that these activities are essential and in the long run should prove supportive to our own programs centering on Latin American-related studies.

One final area needs to be expounded upon: academic disciplines and their role in the teaching of Latin American related courses. Given the general makeup of the communities served by our campus, and with the goals in mind for our programs, as discussed earlier, our department decided upon a two-fold approach. First, the Latin American-related content, wherever possible, would be increased in our survey courses.

That would seem particularly possible in such disciplines as American history, sociology, and, to some extent, political science. Second, special courses emphasizing the Spanish-speaking peoples, such as our history of selected minorities courses, would be further developed. The rationale behind this approach seems sensible. For the most part, courses in history, humanities, sociology, and so on offered at the lower division level do not include much (if anything) on the Spanish-speaking peoples in the United States. Courses emphasizing the heritage of those people are reserved for upper division and graduate level studies. That barrier must be broken, and perhaps a two-year college is where it most likely will occur. As institutions that emphasize instruction rather than research, the two-year colleges may have more flexibility. With such flexibility, an energetic faculty could increase substantially the concentration on the Spanish-speaking cultures in lower division courses. Without such a concentration, survey courses, as we have discussed them, present a cultural imbalance. American history does not begin in 1607 as is so often taught, but with the pre-Columbian Americas. That view is accepted in upper division Latin American courses, and it is time for it to be accepted in lower division American history survey courses also. Our own college was influential in instilling that concept into the I.T.V. course on American history sponsored jointly by the Dallas Community College District and the Tarrant County Junior College District. Other disciplines often reflect the same imbalance, and thus need development.

Along with increasing Latin American related content in the above areas, our departmental faculty realized the need to emphasize cultural history in our own minorities history courses. A politically oriented "Chicano history" type of course (so popular a few years ago) was not what was desired. To create interest in the Spanish-speaking cultures in some areas and nourish others, as previously emphasized, an academic and interesting approach was deemed necessary. Essential to this view was the realization that we were interested in teaching Latin American-related programs to as diverse a student population as possible. The rural, Protestant, generally white segment of our student body was as important to us as our Mexican Americans or Chicanos. While emphasizing the cultural heritage of the Spanish-speaking peoples in our courses, we have attempted

to make the classes more meaningful to the students by drawing upon experts from the community who are of Mexican American or Chicano background. A supplemental benefit derived from that was the establishment of good relations between the college and the Spanish-speaking community itself. Establishing close working relationships in that manner seemed essential to the ultimate success of any program at the college related to the Mexican American or Chicano culture.

We have been discussing the approach to teaching Latin American-related courses at the Northwest Campus of Tarrant County Junior College, but, as the title to this work indicates, that is just one approach. Regional differences, social and economic variations, and many other considerations dictate that what may seem to be working on this campus may not work on others. For example, the two-year colleges along Texas's southern border would have a much higher percentage of Mexican American or Chicano student enrollment in their programs, and that presents different problems and prospects. The administrative, faculty, and staff commitment to an increased emphasis on Spanish-speaking culture in our courses may not be as visible on other campuses as it is on ours at the present time. And certainly every campus faces the problem of filling elective courses. No matter how many excellent programs and courses are available, many students take only what they need in their degree plans.

But those very situations appear to support the view that Latin American-related content must be increased in already established basic lower division courses where applicable (and frankly in many cases not increased but introduced). In those courses a large number of students are encountered. If they can be introduced to the heritage of the Spanish-speaking peoples in survey courses in history, literature, humanities, sociology, and so on, a beginning has been made. Certainly an imbalance that has existed for far too long in our teaching will be at least somewhat corrected. There is good reason to believe that increased emphasis in the survey courses would encourage greater interest in special courses concentrating on the Spanish-speaking peoples.

What must come from all of this ultimately, of course, is a realization by a wider audience that the Spanish-speaking cultures have not been properly represented in college teaching. The day is going to have to come when those cultures are treated in more depth by textbook publishers, state legislatures, and professional organizations patronized by faculty. Also needed are closer communications between the two-year and four-year institutions. Programs such as those being sponsored by the Latin American Cultures Studies Project for Community and Junior Colleges are clearly a step in the right direction.

Incorporating Chicano Materials Into the Community College Curriculum

by

José Roberto Júarez, Sr.

The sheer size, the geographic proximity, and the economic importance of Latin America are reasons enough to warrant the inclusion of Latin American content courses in any community college curriculum. My colleagues discuss those courses where Latin American content comes naturally--geography, world history, history of Texas, art, etc. Many modules, especially of a comparative nature, could be prepared. I would, of course, hope that the comparisons would not be invidious but based on a thorough and solid knowledge of the geography, ecology, and history of Latin America. If the introduction of Latin American content modules is to result in an attitude of, "Why can't Latin Americans be democratic, hard-working, God-fearing people like us?" then it would be best if such modules were eliminated. A thorough grounding in the colonial period and the ensuing colonialism is essential for junior college instructors.

More and more, the areas considered a legitimate part of Latin American studies include not only the region south of the Rio Grande but also the region north and west of the Rio Bravo. Some of us who have been involved in Mexican American or Chicano studies consider this an attempt to preempt and weaken the budding Chicano studies institutes or programs. However, the reality is that federal largess has decreed that the Hispanic experience in the U.S. is a legitimate area for Latin American studies. I suppose that most Chicanos will take the attitude of Little Red Riding Hood, who asked the wolf, "How am I going to explain to my Daddy that you abused me twice?" The wolf, surprised, asked, "What do you mean, twice?" and she coyly answered, "You are going to stay around, aren't you, honeybunch?"

If we are going to sit back and enjoy it then let's consider the possibilities. Each community college region will have to deal with Chicano or Mexican American content depending on its student population.

One would think that the area along the U.S.-Mexican border would be the easiest area in the world in which to introduce Mexican American content courses. That is not necessarily so. I contend that it is easier to attract students, both Chicanos and non-Chicanos, in those areas where Chicanos constitute half, or less than half of the population. Laredo, with 85 percent of its population Mexican American, would hardly support a Raza week. The 16th of September and the 5th of May go by with nary a celebration. Why? Because Nuevo Laredo will take care of that, and besides, Laredo celebrates George Washington's birthday. The border inhabitant feels too close to his roots to be compelled to study them. The student in Fort Worth, in Houston, in Uvalde, on the other hand, feels a need to examine his past because it is not as pervasive as it is on the border. He feels a need to revitalize the Mexican experience because it is being lost--gradually in most areas, rapidly in others. Those community colleges with a Chicano population of 15 percent or more, therefore, should be encouraged to offer courses with a Mexican American content. I can assure you that the student body will respond favorably. Those of us on the border are already offering such courses with success. We would be remiss were we not to do so.

Parenthetically, one of the approaches that community colleges can take is to offer "double whammy" courses. For example, the U.S. history course could be taught in Spanish and the student receive credit in both history and Spanish grammar and composition. The student benefits by seeing that Spanish is a functional, live language, that he can actually communicate in a scholarly manner, that he can increase his vocabulary substantially by just reading, and that he is studying a language not because he has to but because it is a useful tool of communication. I'm sure that creative administrators will solve the problem of allocating contact hours to the proper departmental faculty.

I mention teaching U.S. history. No other course lends itself as much as this one to the introduction of Mexican American material. Our survey courses have been seriously deficient in dealing with the presence of the Chicano. The usual treatment is a rapid review of the discovery, the conquest in Mexico, the colonial period in the Southwest with an emphasis on the missions, the loss of Texas, and then the Mexican War.

From a Chicano perspective, the treatment of these topics leaves much to be desired, and a community college with a substantial number of Mexican American students has, I believe, an obligation to deal in greater depth with episodes that have not always been candidly and objectively presented. The socio-economic aspects of the Spanish Mexican experience have always been slighted in survey texts. It would be of great psychological as well as scholarly value to Chicanos if their mother country's background were more faithfully presented, especially vis à vis the U.S.

The period up to 1848 and the signing of the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, which marked the end of the official war against Mexico, at least has the merit of providing a body of material to revise. But what happens from 1848 to the 1960's? Lo and behold, Chicanos taking a survey course must conclude that they somehow disappeared, only to be resurrected about 12 or 15 million strong in the late 1960s when they begin to riot. Why they riot is treated in an abhorrent historical vacuum.

The vacuum is gradually being filled by scholars. What knowledge we have now is sketchy but it can provide an answer to the very legitimate question of where the Mexican American came from, or, more properly, what the Mexican American experienced after 1848 that helpes to explain the late 1960s and 1970s. A professor teaching the survey course could, for example, point out that the Mexican American, like the Indian, was involuntarily annexed, and that fact alone has tremendous implications in the development of the Chicano. In dealing with expansion, with Manifest Destiny, the loss of lands--through just and unjust means--by the Hispanic elite should be discussed in view of the guarantees of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the aborted Protocol of Querétaro. In treating the forty-niners, or in dealing with the U.S. Civil war, or with the Spanish American War, or the First World War, or with the fight among farmers, cattlemen, and sheepmen, the integral role of the Mexican American could and should be pointed out. The mines, the railroads, and the lumber and agricultural industries owe much to the blood and sweat of Mexicans of the nineteenth century. The process by which the Mexican American was marginalized in terms of education and economics by 1910, before the large influx of new immigrants from Mexico, deserves attention. The fact that Mexicans, like Blacks, were subjected to lynchings, that they were welcome

in times of plenty as laborers in the fields, mines, and railroads, but in times of economic distress, as in the 1930s when half a million were deported, they were unwanted, could help Mexican American children understand why they and their parents may not enjoy the full blessings of the American Dream. Your students would have a healthier respect for their parents' accomplishments if they knew that until the 1940s they too were legally segregated in schools in some states, including Texas, and that, like the Blacks, they could not swim in public pools except on the day the pool was to be cleaned, or that they could sit only in certain sections of theaters. The Texas Good Neighbor Commission was created in 1943--when Mexican Americans were dying in larger proportion than their percentage of the population during the Second World War--not because of the alturistic motives of the governor of Texas but simply because the Mexican government refused to allow any laborers into Texas until discrimination and segretation in public places was ended. It is unpleasant to be reminded of such facts, but history is not a pleasant record.

Many more concrete examples of topics that could and should be incorporated into a survey course could be given. What is important is that a more exact portrait of Mexicans in the U.S. be presented. The portrait should be one of individuals who settled in the Southwest since the seventeenth century, who pioneered along the river valleys and coastlines, who mingled with the Native Americans and adopted and adapted many of their foods, customs, and language. The leaders of these Spanish Mexicans became enamored of the ideals of the American Revolution, tried to adopt them between 1810 and 1846 but failed, and were finally incorporated into the U.S. through war. Once annexed, the leaders fought for acceptance as full-fledged Americans, but only a small elite were ever accepted. Even the hopes of the Mexicans of New Mexico (who made up over half of the population of the territory) were dashed when the U.S. Congress waited until 1912 to accept that territory as a state even though it had met all of the requirements for statehood since 1846. Even though most Mexicans came after 1910--over two million--the Mexican immigrant should not be considered as just another wave of immigrants who will soon be assimilated. Instructors should keep in mind that these immigrants are coming to a Southwest that they considered their own and to have been

taken away unjustly. They should keep in mind that these immigrants came to an area where their language and customs were alive and doing well. Geographically there was no radical change in environment, and there was no long ocean crossing to allow the immigrant to make up his mind that he was to become an American.

The possibilities for incorporating materials on the Mexican American are many. The primary and secondary sources are available. What is needed is a group of teacher-scholars willing to spend the time and energy necessary to fuse the historical experiences of a minority that existed before the creation of our country with the general history of the United States.

The Challenges Inherent in Teaching Latin American History at the Community/Junior College Level

by
Felix C. Tejera

Within the framework of educational theory, community/junior colleges have had the duty of imparting knowledge to those people in the community whose educational needs, for a variety of reasons, cannot be met by four-year institutions. Although the problems created by this situation vary from community to community, instructors all too often are confronted with the same feelings of frustration and disenchantment.

As instructors we are already aware that our current students have received less academic preparation than has ever been the case in the past. We are already aware of our students' apathy and insensitivity toward history, perhaps as a result of previous negative experiences with it. More important, our efforts to deal with such problems are stymied by bureaucratic inefficiency, memoranda from the administration, college guidelines, and innumerable other stumbling blocks.

As instructors faced with this particular set of circumstances, we try to be innovative, to change our approach, to augment the offerings in our discipline in order to increase its appeal to the student. As we try to implement all of these measures, we are often faced with a division chair, usually from another discipline, who has very little understanding of our needs and who may be openly hostile to our suggestions. We may try to explain to him that given the growing interdependence of our world and the ethnic mixture of our area of the country, a course in Latin American history would be a beneficial offering. The response may be, "That need has to be shown," although seldom, if ever, is the way to measure need mentioned. Another response we often receive is that "the college facilities are used to the maximum, and it would be impossible to add any college offerings." Nevertheless, as we walk around the campus we will probably find empty rooms, or rooms being used for such "educational"

courses as underwater basket weaving or the mating habits of the fruit fly. At other times we might be told that the subject is already being covered completely by the offering of one course of colonial Mexican history every two years or that adequate coverage of the subject occurs in Spanish classes.

If we continue to insist on the importance of offering such a course, we might become personae non gratae at the offices of the division chair and the dean. We might also be reminded of the administration's concern with the fact that some instructors are not passing a sufficient number of students and that perhaps those instructors should take "a good look" at their standards. We are also informed that everybody is capable of some learning and should not fail any course. Perhaps such critics should consider that given enough time and appropriate environment even a monkey could eventually write the entire text of the Bible.

We have now received numerous hints as to what might happen if we continue to fight. Nevertheless, if we continue the process, eventually, perhaps to get rid of us, the course may be approved. This is usually on a sort of "try-out" basis. We are informed that the course "must make it," otherwise there will be no need to keep it in the catalog. If we get lucky, the registrar's office will not lose the course cards, and the counseling staff will not tell the students that the course does not transfer, even if it does, or that they need at least fifteen hours of history to register for it. It is during this time that we must become salespeople. We must make the students aware of the existence of the course. Once the course "makes it," the emphasis shifts. We must now concentrate on making the class as complete a learning experience as possible.

As the course develops, the problems we face are numerous but by no means insurmountable. Above everything else, we must be able to increase the awareness of the student regarding our subject. As the awareness of the subject increases and he realizes its importance in everyday life, the student's motivation will improve. This in turn will reflect on the total classroom atmosphere and enable the teacher to make the class an effective learning experience.

Since in order to maximize learning the student must be both participant and listener, what follows is a series of recommendations to make such a course in Latin American history as effective as possible.

First, the course itself must be given an interdisciplinary approach. In this way we increase the involvement of the student. The introduction of economics, political science, urban problems, and so forth will give the student the opportunity to use all the other subject material he has mastered. This will make him more aware of the interdependence and similarity of the problems of the world today.

Second, we must avoid dogmatizing. We must raise questions and indicate alternatives. This will involve the student in the most important learning processes: thinking and comprehending for himself.

Third, we must identify students with special knowledge and/or interest and encourage them to do special projects. In this way we not only increase the amount of materials that students are exposed to, but we also recognize those students with special knowledge in a subject area. This will give a more "human interest" emphasis to the course.

Fourth, whenever possible we must relate the events of the course to events in United States history, world history, and contemporary affairs. In this way the history of a region will not be learned in a vacuum but will reflect the interdependence of our world.

Last but not least, we must remember that our goal is not to make our students experts in a certain area but to build a foundation for future growth. With this foundation, we hope, the student will be able to: first, take a factual situation and analyze it, using the tools of logic and common sense that are available to him; second, study and discuss social problems and human conditions now and in the past; third, identify bias in a speech, document, or book; fourth, formulate questions, find facts, and make judgments based on his findings. If these objectives are achieved, we as instructors will probably have attained our maximum goal. We will have

prepared the student to be concerned with the broad spectrum of human development, and we can hope that he will be responsive to the shifting needs of our complex society.

But dealing with an unsymapthetic administration in trying to create new course offerings is but one of the many problems that we face. The truth is that very few of us, if any, are really prepared to deal with the many student-oriented problems facing us, and, as I mentioned before, we are left to our own devices in dealing with them. Therefore, we tend to turn to other places for advice. We try scholarly publications. There we find that seldom, if ever, do they have any reference to our problems, and when they do it will probably be in the form of an article discoursing on the need to improve teaching.

The next step we might try is attending the conventions, but there we face the same situation. Even in the so-called "teaching seminars," the main thrust is not directed toward the lower division student but toward the upper division one. So that most of what we might learn, assuming that we could gain anything from those red-eyed and fuzzy-tongued people, would not apply to our special students.

Another problem we must contend with is the textbook selection process. Textbooks in our field have been written with anybody but the student in mind. Most of them do have one or two redeeming qualities by perhaps shedding some light on one thing or the other and perhaps should be on a library shelf. Yet, we must beware of the reviewers of such books. Since in the majority of cases they are professors at four-year colleges with little if any understanding of the kinds of students taking our courses.

Not the least significant of the problems is ourselves. Let's face it: we are a product of the environment described above. Throughout our graduate student years the main thrust of our education and training was toward research and perhaps some teaching. This teaching was usually to be at the upper levels. Even if we got the chance to teach a course at a lower level it was only because graduate students and those in bad standing in the department would teach those courses. As a matter of

fact, there was always something demeaning about teaching lower division courses. So that by the time we left those "halls of learning," we had acquired a tremendous amount of knowledge that was going to be completely useless or even a handicap in teaching at the community college.

It is for these reasons that the creation of the Latin American Culture Studies Project is so important. Through the programs to be implemented by it, we as professionals will be able to have a clearinghouse of information regarding our courses. Through it we will be able to better deal with the problem of making our college administrators aware of the need to teach Latin American studies at two-year institutions. Also, through the series of conferences, seminars, workshops, and consultantships conducted by members of the program, and geared to our specific needs, we will be able to develop and introduce new methods in our classrooms, increase our offerings of courses on Latin America, and accomplish this at a much broader level than four-year schools. In other words, through the help of the program we will be able to develop not only ourselves but also new curriculum materials that will meet the needs of our "non-traditional" students.

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